

Disability Based On Drug Addiction Or Alcoholism

A new law prohibits Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits and Medicare and Medicaid coverage based on those benefits to people who are disabled because of drug addiction and/or alcoholism. This law applies to people who are applying for benefits or who are already getting benefits because drug addiction and/or alcoholism is a contributing factor material to their disability.

What the Law Requires

Under this new law, if you are currently receiving disability benefits based on drug addiction and/or alcoholism, your cash benefits and Medicare and Medicaid based on SSI will terminate January 1, 1997. However, if you believe that you would be disabled even if you stopped using drugs and/or alcohol, you may reapply for benefits. You also will be able to appeal our decision that your disability is based on drug addiction or alcoholism.

During this time your benefits will continue to be paid to a representative payee, and you still must undergo appropriate treatment for your drug addiction and/or alcoholism, if it is available.

The following provisions apply to applications filed on or after July 1, 1996: If you receive benefits for another disabling impairment and we find that you cannot manage your own benefits, you will be required to have a representative payee. And, if you have a drug addiction and/or alcoholism condition, you will be referred to your state drug addiction or alcoholism agency for treatment.

Representative Payee Requirements

If we send your benefits to a representative payee, the representative payee will manage the money for you. Your representative payee may be a nonprofit social service agency, a governmental social service agency or public guardian, another organization, a family member or other interested person we approve to act in your best interest.

For More Information

You can get more information 24 hours a day by calling Social Security's toll-free number, **1-800-772-1213**. You can speak to a service representative between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days. Our lines are busiest early in the week and early in the month, so it's best to call at other times. Whenever you call, have your Social Security number handy.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our toll-free "TTY" number, 1-800-325-0778, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days.

The Social Security Administration treats all calls confidentially—whether they're made to our toll-free numbers or to one of our offices. We also want to ensure that you receive accurate and courteous service. That's why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some incoming and outgoing telephone calls.